

# Vocational Teacher Preparation – Practicum (Field Experience) FAQs

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## What is a practicum/field experience?

Field experiences are developed to provide opportunities for candidates in teacher education programs to observe and apply theory learned in an authentic classroom and practical setting. In addition, it provides candidates with opportunities to work with a full range of candidates including varying ages and abilities and different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds. At all levels of field experiences, candidates are asked to act as “participant observers”, and to closely monitor all classroom/setting interactions. Candidates are also asked to seek ways to contribute to the environment in which they are placed. Teacher candidates are required to complete a minimum of 100 clock hours of classroom experience prior to student teaching.

Field experience is attached to coursework in several different courses. Assignments for the field work may include keeping a journal of the experiences, performance based activities, and other assignments as assigned by each course instructor.

## I have a disability. How do I request special accommodations?

You will need to contact the Disability Support Services Office; the FPO will arrange accommodations for you based on their determination of needs. The Disability Support Services Office is located in 155 Campus Center, phone: 312-3358, email [dss@oswego.edu](mailto:dss@oswego.edu)

## Will I need transportation?

Candidates are responsible for arranging their own reliable transportation in advance. The commute may be as long as 50 miles so plan accordingly.

## How can I find transportation if I do not have a car?

Options candidates have for transportation if you do not have a car are:

- Renting a [zipcar](#) from the school
- Taking a bus via [Centro Bus Service](#)
- Send an email to the field placement office at [fpoffice@oswego.edu](mailto:fpoffice@oswego.edu) to obtain contact information for other candidates who will be placed in the same area as you

### **Who sets up field experience placements?**

Vocational Teacher Preparation candidates will arrange their own field experience placements. You must always follow district protocol when arranging field experience. Field experiences must be approved by the teacher and administration prior to your arrival at the school.

### **What do I do on the first day of my placement?**

You should report to your assigned school's main office half an hour prior to the placement time. Be sure to follow all sign-in procedures in the main office every time you report. Introduce yourself to the office staff and the principal and ask for directions to your cooperating teacher's classroom.

### **How do I keep track of my field experiences?**

You will maintain a Field Experience (Practicum) Log that is signed by the host teacher at the end of each visit. At the end of the course, you will submit the completed log to your course instructor. The completed log will be submitted to the VTP department as part of your application to student teach.

### **What should I do while at my placement?**

At all levels of field experience candidates are asked to act as a "participant observer" and to closely monitor all classroom/setting interactions. Part of being a participant observer is that you are **ACTIVELY** participating during your placement. Candidates are asked to seek ways to contribute to the classroom in which they are visiting. The field experience is not limited to just one classroom setting. With the cooperating teacher's approval, candidates may visit other places in their assigned school/ practicum setting to learn as much as possible about the profession.

You may also receive assignments (projects, reflections, etc) from your professors that directly apply to what you are doing while at your placement. Be sure to notify your assigned teacher well in advance of any assignments that will affect them (teacher interviews, mini-lessons, etc).

### **What should I do if I am sick or have an emergency?**

You are responsible for attending the entire week but in the event of an absence or tardiness due to illness or an unavoidable emergency, you will need to call the school as soon as you know you cannot attend and let the office know you will not be there:

- Identify yourself by name and college
- State the name of the teacher you are working with
- Indicate your reason for absence
- Ask that a message be given to your cooperating teacher

You should make arrangements to make up the missed time based upon the cooperating teacher's willingness and availability.